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RUEHTN/AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN 6510  
RUEH DU/AMCONSUL DURBAN 0636  
RUEHSA/AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG 8857  
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PRETORIA 000176

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ANC YOUTH LEAGUE DOWNPLAYS CHALLENGES

REF: 08 PRETORIA 2255

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Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR RAYMOND L. BROWN. REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

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Summary  
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11. (S) African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) leaders discussed their defense of President Kgalema Motlanthe against allegations of infidelity, the party's list process, and the prospects for the Congress of the People (COPE) in a lengthy discussion with Poloffs on January 26. ANCYL spokesman Floyd Shivambu and ANCYL National Executive Committee member Magdalene Moonsamy asserted that they are publicly defending Motlanthe as strongly as they defended ANC President Jacob Zuma over the years. (Note: A number of daily newspapers reported over the weekend that Motlanthe is having marital troubles and is involved in at least two extra-marital affairs. Many suspect the stories were leaked by Zuma's supporters to call into question Motlanthe's character ahead of the list finalization. End Note.) They noted that delays in finalizing the ANC's party lists are because the party is taking pains to maintain a balance of views at the national and provincial levels. They dismissed COPE's chances to weaken the ANC's hold on power while noting that any opposition's attempt to usurp a liberation party is always "messy." End Summary.

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"We Are Defending Motlanthe"  
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12. (S) ANCYL spokesman Floyd Shivambu and ANCYL National Executive Committee member Magdalene Moonsamy met with Poloffs on January 26 at the Parktonian in Johannesburg. Shivambu and Moonsamy, relaxed and sharply dressed, opened the meeting by discussing the ANCYL's defense of Motlanthe. The ANCYL has at times been critical of Motlanthe, and Poloff pointed out that the ANCYL has not been nearly as strong in defending Motlanthe as it has been in defending Zuma over the years. Shivambu smiled, laughed, and then replied, "We are defending Motlanthe. I am getting tired of writing that, 'We stand behind Motlanthe as the President.'" (Note: The ANCYL did in fact release a statement this week saying that Motlanthe should remain the party's number two behind Zuma. End Note.) He denied that the ANCYL or that Zuma supporters in the ANC's National Executive Committee were responsible for leaking the stories suggesting that Motlanthe is having marital troubles and is engaged in extra-marital affairs with at least women. He blamed the stories on an "over eager

media." Shivambu said that Motlanthe has always been a "caretaker leader" and that he would stand down as national leader after the election.

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"The List Process is Complicated"  
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13. (S) Shivambu and Moonsamy attributed the ANC's slowness in finalizing its party lists to making sure the process is as collaborative as possible. The ANC last week held discussions in Johannesburg to determine who would represent the party in various legislatures around the country. Moonsamy, who is number one on the ANCYL's National Executive Committee, said that the party is working hard to make sure viable leaders are in the best, "most strategic" positions possible for the election. She said, "It is hard work to build party lists that include SACP (South African Communist Party), COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions), the Youth League, and the Women's League. We must make sure everyone is happy and well-placed to advance our agenda." Shivambu and Moonsamy admitted that the ANCYL will not get as many positions on the lists as it would like, but did not seem upset at having a smaller number. They said the final lists should be made public this week and that "final checking is going on now." Shivambu denied that the ANC is delaying the process because it is worried about defections by members unhappy about where they are on a list. Both leaders conceded that the biggest difficulty facing the ANCYL and the ANC is working with SACP. Shivambu noted, "It is not easy, but it happens."

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"COPE Doesn't Matter"  
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14. (S) Shivambu claimed that COPE was poorly conceived and would not be a threat to the ANC. He noted that, "the splinter's biggest problem is that it is a middle class party." He said that COPE's party manifesto "says nothing new" and vowed that the ANC would carry on after the election. He judged that COPE's biggest weakness is its inability to draw voters from urban townships. Shivambu related that the ANC would consolidate its gains across the country and focus on delivery, and warned that any attempt by an opposition to usurp a liberation party is always "messy" and has failed to work. (Note: Shivambu did not make the remark in a threatening or a menacing way, but the implication was that the ANC could make it hard for COPE to govern where the opposition won seats. End Note.) Neither leader made predictions about how well the ANC would do at the polls or say whether the ANC would hold onto its two-thirds majority in Parliament.

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Comment  
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15. (S) Shivambu and Moonsamy downplayed three of the biggest challenges facing the ANC at the moment. First, the two downplayed the tension between the Motlanthe and Zuma camps. Even though they said that the ANCYL is defending Motlanthe as well as it has defended Zuma, there are many political analysts and pundits who suspect the league is responsible for casting the President in a negative light with the public. Second, the leaders downplayed the delay in the national list process. The process is admittedly complicated, but there are reports from within the ANC and the NEC that there is tension and mistrust over who is going to end up on the party's lists and who is not. Nearly everyone following the process, which ahead of past elections would have been completed by now, thinks it has been delayed out of fear of a mass exodus to COPE of those not included in

the list. Last, the two leaders downplayed the likelihood of COPE success. Nevertheless, the ANC is concerned that COPE could undermine the ruling party's support in some places. Saying that COPE does not matter counters many of the ANC's recent actions. Many political analysts and pundits suspect the ANC organized a counter rally in Port Elizabeth last weekend to detract attention from the new party's manifesto launch, which took place nearby.

BALL